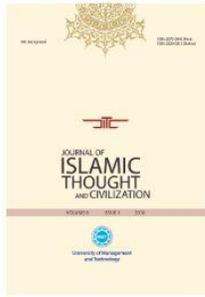


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Impact of Formal Networks on Women Entrepreneurship in Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of formal networks on women entrepreneurial performance in Pakistan. The prevailing environment of building formal networks along with their importance has also been discussed. The problems faced by women entrepreneurs in building formal networks and the role performed by reputable institutes in networking have been inspected in detail. The paper also explores the concept of women entrepreneurship in Islamic perspective by citing verses from the Holy Qur'an; it also discusses the famous Muslim Entrepreneurs in Islam. The study employed a research design where self-administrative questionnaires were used to collect data from two groups of women entrepreneurs; Registered and Non-Registered. The Registered members were selected from the list provided by seven running women-led chambers of commerce and industries of Pakistan, whereas, the non-registered members were selected from the groups on Facebook. The quantitative method of research has been employed using a sample size of 506, which was derived using a simple random sampling. The Multiple Regression analysis reveals that formal networks have a significant impact on women entrepreneurial performance on both the groups. Furthermore; the history of Islam reveals that there are no religious barriers in Islam, which restrict women not to choose entrepreneurship or carry out entrepreneurial activities. Suggestions have been given to create environment of building formal networks for both registered as well as non-registered women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Women entrepreneurship, formal networks, entrepreneurial performance, registered entrepreneurs, non-registered entrepreneurs, Islamic history

Introduction

In this era, women entrepreneurship is expanding around the world and women entrepreneurs are the potential emerging human resource in the 21st century to beat variety of economic challenges in the global perspective.¹ For a woman, entrepreneurship is a route towards empowerments where she can contribute positively in a variety of dimensions and aspects in job creation and economic development.² Women

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¹Vani Sarada Ramesh, "Women Entrepreneurship: Turning Challenges into Ppportunities," *International Journal of Trade and Global Business Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2013): 117-123.

²Lisa K. Gundry, and Welsch P. Harold, "The Ambitious Entrepreneur: High Growth Strategies of Women-owned Enterprises," *Journal of Business Venturing* 16, no. 5 (2001): 453-470.

entrepreneurs have turned out to be significant players in the landscape of entrepreneurial activities; and like men, females are starting their career in business in search of independence and controlling their destinies.³ The recent phenomenon is that women are coming to the job market and looking and struggling for income oriented jobs so as to get the social status like males and to become independent.⁴ They are playing the role of active actors capable enough to negotiate with the environment and situations that come across their way of performing actions.⁵ Women are entering the job markets and struggling and looking for jobs that are income oriented so as to get the social status like males and to become independent. They are playing the role of active actors capable enough to negotiate with the environment and situations that come across their way of performing actions.⁶ Furthermore, the contribution made by women business owners to economic development includes job creation as well as economic growth stemming from the increase in their active involvement in corporate life.

Pakistan is the 10th (tenth) largest country in terms of the size of its labor force. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics of Labor Force Survey (2014-15) reveals that labor force in Pakistan has risen from 60.10 million in 2013-14 to 61.04 million in 2014-2015, which explains that 0.94 million people have joined the labor force. As far the number of employed from 2008 till 2015 is concerned, it has risen from 50.7 million to 57.42. The volume of unemployed persons of Pakistan over the last six years (from 2008 till 2015), the statistics reveal that it has increased from 2.93 to 3.62, which is alarming. It means the rate of unemployed people has been rising in Pakistan. Furthermore, the volume of unemployed females has risen from 1.06 to 1.31 over a period of six years (from 2008 to 2015) which means that employment opportunities are not available to a greater extent to females of Pakistan. The state of unemployed women is further explained as follows:

Table 1: Civilian Labor Force in Pakistan (in millions)

Variables	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Labor Force	53.72	56.33	57.24	59.74	60.10	61.04
Employed	50.79	53.21	53.84	56.01	56.52	57.42
Volume of Unemployed Persons	2.93	3.12	3.40	3.73	3.58	3.62
Employed Male	40.04	40.58	41.73	43.49	43.33	44.07
Unemployed Male	1.87	1.86	2.22	2.32	2.32	2.31
Employed Female	10.75	11.29	12.11	12.52	13.19	13.35
Unemployed Female	1.06	1.19	1.18	1.24	1.26	1.31

³Erik R. Pages, "The Changing Demography of Entrepreneurship," *Local Economy* 20, no. 1 (2005): 93-97.

⁴Amber Ferdos, "Social Status of Rural and Urban Working Women in Pakistan-A Comparative Study," (Masters Thesis, Osnabrück University, [Online] 2005).

⁵Nelly Samson Maliva, "Women Entrepreneurs' Access to Tourism Markets: A Comparison Between Tanzania and Sweden," (2017).

⁶Nelly Samson Maliva, "Women Entrepreneurs' Strategies and Tourism Development in Zanzibar" (2017).

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics of Labor Force Survey (2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15)

Women in Pakistan hold nearly fifty percent share in the total population but their role in terms of economic participation of country remains very low as compared to men. Pakistani women don't take up entrepreneurship as their first priority. Out of 134 countries, Pakistan stands on 132nd position when it comes to economic activities and prospects available to women.⁷ According to GEM (2010), overall entrepreneurial activity in Pakistan is pretty low and it's even lower i.e., 3.43% when it comes to female entrepreneurship activity rate which is 4.1 times less than their male counterparts.

Across the globe, women are considered to be a gender which is weaker emotionally and physically, hence, the opportunities and the prospects available to women in the business world is an area which is still not explored to date, and calls for the attention of the scholars.⁸ In the last thirty years a small number of researches believe that there are not many women who own a business; barely a few studies assume the process of entrepreneurship as a male activity,⁹ where other studies¹⁰ describe and explain theories related to entrepreneurship as 'created by men, for men and applied to men.' After a notable assessment of available literature, it can be said that the women entrepreneurship has been ignored by mass media and academic community across the globe because academic articles on women owners are very rare and also media doesn't give a proper coverage to their contributions.¹¹

Pakistani women don't consider entrepreneurship as their first choice and that is why among 134 countries, Pakistan stands at 132nd place in opportunities available to women.¹² It becomes difficult for a woman to maintain balance between business and family in Pakistani patriarchal society because she is responsible to look after her family. Due to new social structure, women around the world have been joining the business world and Pakistani women entrepreneurs can be seen operating in textiles, handicrafts

⁷Anna Nadgrodkiewicz, "Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: The Impact of the 2006 Trade Organizations Ordinance in Pakistan," *Economic Reform Feature Service Article*, Centre for International Private Enterprise CIPE (2011).

⁸Sander Wennekers, and Roy Thurik, "Linking Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth," *Small Business Economics* 13, no. 1 (1999): 27-56.

⁹C. G. Brush, "Research on Women Business Owners: Past Trends, a New Perspective and Future Directions," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 16, no. 4 (1992): 5-30; Nina Gunnerud Berg, "Gender, Place and Entrepreneurship," *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* 9, no. 3 (1997): 259-268.

¹⁰Elisabeth Sundin, and C. Holmquist, "The Growth of Women Entrepreneurship—push or Pull factors? in *The Growth of Women Entrepreneurship—Push or Pull Factors*," (1991).

¹¹Ted Baker, Howard E. Aldrich, and Liou Nina, "Invisible Entrepreneurs: the Neglect of Women Business Owners by Mass Media and Scholarly Journals in the USA," *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* 9, no. 3 (1997): 221-238.

¹²Ibid; Anna Nadgrodkiewicz, "Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: The Impact of the 2006 Trade Organizations Ordinance in Pakistan," *Economic Reform Feature Service Article*, Centre for International Private Enterprise CIPE (2011).

and service sector where the customers are female; which is similar to other Islamic countries where expenses are more than the earnings.¹³

Women underperform on measures like growth and employment¹⁴ and there are several factors that are responsible for that; and lack of having formal networks is one such reason. Although, Pakistani women are starting their businesses but still the trend is not rising at a greater pace and it can be said that it is the need of time to pay attention to Pakistani women who can definitely play a crucial role in making Pakistan an economically sound nation. In most of the cases females enter into the business world and open their own businesses but their entrepreneurial performance gets affected due to the unavailability of formal networks to help them out in giving financial and social support. This study is an effort to address and explore this issue. This research therefore provides a new insight into this particular area.

1.1. Research Objectives

The objectives that this research intends to achieve are:

1. To investigate women entrepreneurship under Islamic perspective.
2. To explore the existing environment of building formal networks for Pakistani women entrepreneurs.
3. To analyze the impact of formal networks on women entrepreneurial performance in Pakistan.

1.2. Significance of Research

This study seeks to provide the insight regarding concept of Women Entrepreneurship in Islam, keeping in view the famous women entrepreneurs in Islamic history. It will change the misconception that women can't enter into business activities. The present study also helps to investigate Pakistan's environment of women entrepreneurship by focusing on the importance of having formal networks and their impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs along with the culture of building such networks. It will assist the policy makers to build institutes that can help the startups or already working enterprises in making strong networks for the success of their businesses.

¹³Muhammad Azam Roomi, and Guy Parrott, "Barriers to Development and Progression of Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan," *The Journal of Entrepreneurship* 17, no. 1 (2008): 59-72; Muhammad Azam Roomi, "Entrepreneurial Capital, Social Values and Islamic Traditions: Exploring the Growth of Women-owned Enterprises in Pakistan," *International Small Business Journal* 31, no. 2 (2013): 175-191.

¹⁴Eileen M. Fischer, A. Rebecca Reuber, and Lorraine S. Dyke. "A Theoretical Overview and Extension of Research on Sex, Gender, and Entrepreneurship," *Journal of Business Venturing* 8, no. 2 (1993): 151-168.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant impact of Formal Networks on Entrepreneurial Performance of Registered Members

H2: There is a significant impact of Formal Networks on Entrepreneurial Performance of Non Registered Members

2. Literature Review

Richard Cantillon (economist) was the first one who used the term “entrepreneur”¹⁵ in 1725. According to him, entrepreneur is someone who purchases factors of production at a certain price so as to sell it at uncertain price through risk.¹⁶ Schumpeter¹⁷ considers entrepreneur as a person who is creative and innovative and he finds new combinations as factors of production for developing a new market, product, or design a new technology. He gets motivation from a dream to find such a kingdom or dynasty where he can prove himself as superior to others in order to achieve success. Peter Drucker¹⁸ made addition to the idea and described entrepreneur as the person looking for a change, responding to this change and exploiting it as an opportunity. As for entrepreneurship, it is a process of creating a new thing, having a value through the devotion of effort and time. In this process social, psychic and financial risks are assumed in order to get personal satisfaction along with monetary rewards.¹⁹ This process is neither a science nor an art rather it is a practice.²⁰

Women entrepreneurs are defined as “the ones who utilize their resources and knowledge for creating or developing new business opportunities; it can either be informally in a home environment without formal registration of their businesses or formally through business registration, hiring office premises; they are truly active to manage the ventures, are accountable to run the everyday operations, and have been operating for more than a year”²¹

¹⁵Robert D. Hisrich, and Michael P. Peters, *Entrepreneurship: Starting, Developing, and Managing a New Enterprise* (McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 1992).

¹⁶Robert F. Hébert, and Albert N. Link, *The Entrepreneur: Mainstream Views and Radical Critiques* (Praeger Publishers, 1988).

¹⁷Joseph Alois Schumpeter, and Redvers Opie, *The Theory of Economic Development: an Inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, Interest, and the Business Cycle* (Oxford University Press, 1961).

¹⁸Peter Drucker, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (Newbridge Communications, 1987).

¹⁹Robert D. Hisrich, and Michael P. Peters, *Entrepreneurship: Starting, Developing, and Managing a New Enterprise* (McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 1992).

²⁰Ibid.; Peter Drucker, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*.

²¹Muhammad Usama Anwar, and G. R. Amber, “Female Entrepreneurs – A Review of the Literature and Proposed Conceptual Framework,” *Proceedings of 2nd International Conference on Business Management*.

2.1. Women Entrepreneurship under Islamic Perspective

Islam believes in the balance of status and rights for preserving social balance. Women are absolutely secured by Islam in all spheres of life. Islam has given equal rights of spiritual development and religious independence to women as compared to men. Islam is not against a Muslim seeking profit by engaging in business ventures. Islam realizes that every business should be undertaken as a form of *ibadah* to gratify the Allah Almighty. Kayed²² believes that business activities strengthen the faith/*Imān* of a Muslim to remember Allah and attending to his duties of a religion. The Qur'ān says: "By men whom neither traffic nor from regular prayer nor from the regular practice of charity."²³ It is instructed in Qur'ān, "and not whoever does righteous good acts, male or female and is a (true) such will entre heaven and not the least unfairness, even to the size of a speck on the back of date stone, will be done to them."²⁴

It is a misconception that Islam prohibits the concept of women entrepreneurship. The study of relevant *Shari'ah* provisions as well as Qur'ānic verses with respect to female entrepreneurship reveals that there are no religious barriers in Islam that restrict women not to choose entrepreneurship. The teachings of Islam are taken into account in this regard which are based on the Qur'ān (Allah's revelation) and *Hadith* (sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as they are the basic authentic sources attributed to Islam.

Islam allows a Muslim woman to work within boundaries so as to guard her dignity and honor. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) encouraged women himself in different spheres of activities including trade and commerce. Islam gives privilege to a Muslim woman to earn money, to enter into legal contracts, to own property and to manage the assets that she possesses. A Muslim woman can run and manage her venture and nobody can claim on her earnings, even her husband. Qur'ān clearly states a positive correlation between women and earnings: "Men shall have a benefit from what they earn, and women shall have a benefit from what they earn."²⁵

Islamic history sheds light on Muslim women engaging and managing different kinds of businesses. It is evident by looking into our Islamic history that many women companions (*sahabiya*) would run and manage several activities related to business that are permitted in Islam. *Sunnah* and Holy Qur'ān call persons (Men and Women) to work and earn lawful money which means that women were allowed to enter into entrepreneurship. The first wife of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Khadija Bint-i-Khuwailad (*RA*) is the example of a prominent Muslim business woman. She was a well-known trader of Quraish and our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) would take her goods to Syria in his youth. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) married Ayesha (*RA*) after the death of

²²Rasem N. Kayed, and M. Kabir Hassan, "Islamic Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Saudi Arabia," *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship* 15, no. 04 (2010): 379-413.

²³Qur'ān: An- Nur 64:37.

²⁴Ibid., An- Nisa 4:124.

²⁵Ibid., An- Nisa 4:32.

Khadija (RA) who was a distinguished religious leader. According to Al-Bukhari, Ayesha (RA) would tell regarding *Umm-al-Momineen* Zainab Bint-i-Jahash that she used to process leather and used that to sew things for selling out in the market. In this way she would spend the earnings for giving alms.

Advent of Islam gave a relief to womenfolk because Islam established equality of men and women; areas of business have also been devoid of a woman who is Muslim. Islam gives permission to a Muslim woman to do the business within the framework of Islamic principles and *Shari'ah*. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW) once said to Sowda, "There is no doubt that you can go out of your home if necessity arises." Allah also permits a Muslim woman in Qur'ān that "whenever they go out of their home they should fully cover their bodies with a long piece of cloth." Islam protects a woman by prescribing her creation of a moral and supportive business environment. The various principles prescribed by Islamic law or *Shari'ah* is given: *Qawwama* specifies the patriarchal responsibility or being in charge and responsible for support of family and *wasta* requires a man to help woman by allowing her entry to their networks. A Muslim woman mostly relies on her family members for introducing to potential business partners,²⁶ therefore; her family should be supportive to her for accessing business networks. Support of her family is positively associated with business performance which is found by several business studies.²⁷ Hence it reveals that from the very beginning Islam completely supports a Muslim woman to enter in to entrepreneurship within the frame work of principles led by *Shari'ah*; her family should be supportive of her. The importance of support of her immediate family is second by the work of business scholars as well. Furthermore, the participation of a Muslim woman is allowed in the economic activities.

2.2. Networks

Networks may contain proper and improper working relationships, previous colleagues, class fellows, enterprises, affiliations, areas and countries.²⁸ Not only sociologists but agriculturists, economists, geologists, management scientists and information scientists have analyzed networks from different angles.²⁹ The types of

²⁶K. Dechant, and Asya Al Lamky, "Toward an Understanding of Arab Women Entrepreneurs in Bahrain and Oman," *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship* 10, no. 02 (2005): 123-140; Yetim, "Social Capital in Female Entrepreneurship," *International Sociology* 23, no. 6 (2008): 864-885.

²⁷Robert D. Hisrich, and Candida G. Brush, "Women Entrepreneurs: A Longitudinal Study," *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research* 187, no. 1 (1987): 566-578; Muhammad Azam Roomi, "Entrepreneurial Capital, Social Values and Islamic Traditions: Exploring the Growth of Women-owned Enterprises in Pakistan," *International Small Business Journal* 31, no. 2 (2013): 175-191; Dianne Hb Welsh, Esra Memili, and Eugene Kaciak, "An Empirical Analysis of the Impact of Family Moral Support on Turkish Women Entrepreneurs," *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge* 1, no. 1 (2016): 3-12.

²⁸Eric L. Hansen, "Entrepreneurial Networks and New Organization Growth," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 19, no. 4 (1995): 7-19.

²⁹Marco van der Leij, and Sanjeev Goyal, "Strong Ties in a Small World," *Tinbergen Institute Discussion Paper No. 2006-008/1*(2006).

networks identified by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2000) are: social networks, friendship networks, business networks, information networks, technical networks, scientific user networks and professional networks. A number of studies are of the view that networks play a pivotal role in the existence and growth of ventures.³⁰ The advantages of networks are given below in the table:

Table 2: Advantages of Networks

Source	Detail
Zimmers, 1986 ³¹	Social networks facilitate the acquisition of resources for the business and increase the chances of exploitation of opportunity.
Barney, 1991 ³²	Diverse networks help an entrepreneur to bring together resources that may be rare and unique.
Lipnack & stamps, 1994 ³³	Networks are evolving as a signature of organization in this age of information.
Ripolles & Blesa, 2005 ³⁴	Networks provide sources to entrepreneurs to help them to achieve their goals.
Ahuja, 2000 ³⁵	Networks may give way into novel technological marketplace and consumer knowledge, together with finest systems.
Staber, 2001 ³⁶	Networks bind and bring entities in a novel system having a rational contract.
Smith, Hood and Houghton, 2005 ³⁷	Having network connections can aid small enterprises and entrepreneurs instill superior knowledge into method.
Brännback and Carsrud, 2007 ³⁸	Building network plays an important part to develop international and global contacts and trade relationships making the world a global village.
Redd and Wu, 2016 ³⁹	The use of social networks helps in gaining access to resources for the creation of business venture and its maintenance.

³⁰Howard Aldrich, "Networking among Women Entrepreneurs," *Women-Owned Businesses* 103 (1989): 132; Isidore Ekpe, Norsiah Mat, and Margaret Isidore Ekpe, "Social Networks and Women Micro-Enterprise Performance: A Conceptual Framework," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 4 (2015): 360; Wadid Lamine, et.al., "The Role of Materially Heterogeneous Entities in the Entrepreneurial Network," *Industrial Marketing Management* (2017).

³¹Catherine Zimmer, "Entrepreneurship through Social Networks," in *The Art and Science of Entrepreneurship* (Ballinger, Cambridge, MA, 1986), 3-23.

³²Jay Barney, "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage," *Journal of Management* 17, no. 1 (1991): 99-120.

³³Jessica Lipnack, and Jeffrey Stamps, *The Age of the Network: Organizing Principles for the 21st Century* (Oliver Wight Ltd Pub; First Edition edition, 1994).

³⁴M. Ripollés, and Andreu Blesa, "Personal Networks as Fosterers of Entrepreneurial Orientation in New Ventures," *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation* 6, no. 4 (2005): 239-248.

³⁵Gautam Ahuja, "The Duality of Collaboration: Inducements and Opportunities in the Formation of Interfirm Linkages," *Strategic Management Journal* (2000): 317-343.

³⁶Udo Staber, "The Structure of Networks in Industrial Districts," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25, no. 3 (2001): 537-552.

³⁷A. D. Smith, J. N. Hood, and S. M. Houghton, "Network Effects and Small Firm Product Offerings," *Poster Paper Presented at the National Academy of Management Meeting Hawaii* (Entrepreneurship Division, 2005).

³⁸Malin Brännback, Alan Carsrud, and Maija Renko, "Exploring the Born Global Concept in the Biotechnology Context," *Journal of Enterprising Culture* 15, no. 01 (2007): 79-100.

³⁹Tammi Redd, and Sabin Wu, "Online Social Networking and Entrepreneurs: The Gender Effect," in *United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship. Conference Proceedings* (United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 2016), IX1.

2.3. Formal/Business Networks

Contemporary business world demands professional relationship networks. Across the globe it is an accepted reality that in business and in jobs people require strong networks for their success.⁴⁰ Formal business networks include government, distributors, customers, suppliers, and competitors.⁴¹ A network approach to entrepreneurship⁴² believes that ability of an entrepreneur to coordinate and organize networks between organizations and individuals is vital for startup of an enterprise⁴³ and its success. In this way, the entrepreneurs develop relations with their outside world and get an access to information, several distribution channels to avail business opportunities and obtain required resources for maintaining a new firm.⁴⁴

The past researches show an association between successful entrepreneurship and tied up of entrepreneurs in networking⁴⁵ and agree that successful entrepreneurs are connected to the world through networking.⁴⁶ These networks not only provide new horizons to the new entrepreneurs to enter into the business world but also enable the ex-entrepreneurs to improve their unhealthy performance of the previous businesses.⁴⁷ Networks are manipulating aspect to identify an opportunity⁴⁸ and they influence the intention to be an entrepreneur, direction and grow his enterprise successfully and improve the business performance.⁴⁹

⁴⁰Ibid.; Howard Aldrich, "Networking among Women Entrepreneurs," *Women-owned Businesses* 103 (1989): 132.

⁴¹Mustafa Gunto, and M. H. Alias, "The Impact of Networking on the SMEs' Ability to Access Financial Government Support in Malaysia," *South East Asia Journal of Contemporary Business, Economics and Law* 5, no. 3 (2014): 9-17.

⁴²Catherine Zimmer, "Entrepreneurship through Social Networks," 3-23.

⁴³Bengt Johannisson, "Business Formation - a Network Approach," *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 4, no. 3-4 (1988): 83-99.

⁴⁴Eric L. Hansen, "Entrepreneurial Networks and New Organization Growth," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 19, no. 4 (1995): 7-19.

⁴⁵Sue Birley, Stan Cromie, and Andrew Myers, "Entrepreneurial Networks: Their Emergence in Ireland and Overseas," *International Small Business Journal* 9, no. 4 (1991): 56-74; Isaac Y. Addae, Tammi C. Redd, Sharon A. Simmons, and Robert P. Singh, "The Influence of Online Social Networks on the Stages of New Venture Creation (interactive PAPER)," *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research* 34, no. 7 (2014): 8.

⁴⁶Nan S. Langowitz, Maria Minniti, and Pia Arenius, "Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 2004 Report on Women and Entrepreneurship," University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership Historical Research Reference in Entrepreneurship, (2005).

⁴⁷Erik Stam, David Audretsch, and Joris Meijaard, "Renascent Entrepreneurship," *Journal of Evolutionary Economics* 18, no. 3-4 (2008): 493-507.

⁴⁸Alexander Ardichvili, Richard Cardozo, and Sourav Ray, "A Theory of Entrepreneurial Opportunity Identification and Development," *Journal of Business Venturing* 18, no. 1 (2003): 105-123.

⁴⁹Per Davidsson, and Benson Honig, "The Role of Social and Human Capital among Nascent Entrepreneurs," *Journal of Business Venturing* 18, no. 3 (2003): 301-331; Morales-Gualdrón, Silvia T., and Salvador Roig, "The New Venture Decision: An Analysis Based on the GEM Project Database," *The International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* 1, no. 4 (2005): 479-499; Isidore Ekpe, Norsiah

2.4. Networks of Female Entrepreneurs

To have business networks is a challenging task for entrepreneurs especially when it comes to female entrepreneurs. Male entrepreneurs are active in networking than females due to economic and cultural limitations⁵⁰ and business networks are lower in female owned business entities and greater in male owned firms.⁵¹ Unfortunately a woman entrepreneur feels alone and sometimes helpless and loses hopes in the future prospects of her business when she tries to depend on such networks but is unable to locate facilitating avenues for the promotion of her business.⁵² Women are barred from informal or social networks in comparison with men because of lack of time.⁵³ The barriers faced by women leading to high failure rates and lower growth rates of their enterprises are socialization networks and lack of business contacts. Women raise startup capital from friends and relatives.⁵⁴ Networking increases the participation of women in entrepreneurship.⁵⁵ The networking and women participation is positively and significantly correlated and participation of women is found higher in those women who are engaged in networking. It persuades them in getting accessibility to resources for the enterprise which is helpful for females to carry out old businesses better than their competitors.⁵⁶

Mat, and Margaret Isidore Ekpe, "Social Networks and Women Micro-enterprise Performance: a Conceptual Framework," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 4 (2015): 360; Alain Fayolle, Sarah L. Jack, Wadid Lamine, and Didier Chabaud, eds., *Entrepreneurial Process and Social Networks: a Dynamic Perspective* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016); Ehsan Fansuree Surin, Oswald Timothy Edward, Hazman. F. Hussin, and Ismail Ab Wahab, "Recognising the Importance of Strategic Business Network on Business Performance of SME Manufacturing Firm in Malaysia: Analysing The Moderating Influence of Human Capital and Business Environment," *International Journal of Arts and Sciences* (2017): 31-44.

⁵⁰Abu Bakar Hamed, "The Personal Networks of Small Firm Entrepreneurs in Malaysia: an Exploratory Study," (PhD Diss., University of Glasgow, 1995)

⁵¹Ibid.; Howard Aldrich, "Networking among Women Entrepreneurs," in *Women-owned Businesses* 103 (1989): 132.

⁵²Tatiana S. Manolova, Candida G. Brush, and Linda F. Edelman, "What do Women Entrepreneurs Want?" *Strategic Change* 17, no. 3-4 (2008): 69-82.

⁵³M. L. Belcourt, R. J. Burke, and H. Lee-Gosselin, "The Glass Box: Women Business Owners in Canada, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Ottawa," *Google Scholar* (1991).

⁵⁴Paul Davidson Reynolds, and Sammis B. White, *The Entrepreneurial Process: Economic Growth, Men, Women, and Minorities* (Praeger Pub Text, 1997).

⁵⁵D. K. Sarasvathy, Herbert A. Simon, and Lester Lave, "Perceiving and Managing Business Risks: Differences between Entrepreneurs and Bankers," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 33, no. 2 (1998): 207-225; Connie Marie Gaglio, and Jerome A. Katz, "The Psychological basis of Opportunity Identification: Entrepreneurial Alertness," *Small Business Economics* 16, no. 2 (2001): 95-111.

⁵⁶Ahmad, H. Mushtaq, and Shazia Naimat, "Networking and Women Entrepreneurs: Beyond Patriarchal Traditions," *African Journal of Business Management* 5, no. 14 (2011): 5784.

3. Local Development Programs for Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan

In Pakistan, the organizations that are helping out women entrepreneurs in networking are Women Business Development Centre (WBDC) and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI). If a woman entrepreneur is registered to these networks, they provide facilitation to her in terms of knowledge and experience.

3.1. First Women Bank Limited (FWBL)

FWBL is an initiative of the Government of Pakistan, which was founded by the then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. It is working for the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs. It is an exclusive commercial bank and financial institution of its kind. It caters the needs of women and helps them to promote and run trade and industry. Initially it was meant for assisting women who work for micro, small, medium or corporate level by launching micro credit but now it has expended its focal point to variety of financial services apart from micro financing. It is providing loans, training and advisory services to women entrepreneurs so that they can better manage their businesses and other opportunities available in the market.⁵⁷ Women entrepreneurs with age limit 25-55 and holding 50% or more Equity in the business can get loans of up to Rs. 2 Million. The mode of repayment can be quarterly/ monthly one to three years. It means that a woman entrepreneur can easily get this loan for the start-up and working capital.

3.2. Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI)

WCCI works for safeguarding the interests of women entrepreneurs in order to promote trade and industry in every province. Before the implementation of Trade Ordinance 2006, female representation in local chambers was neglected. It is because of this ordinance due to which women shaped their chambers and their representation was visible.⁵⁸ It empowers women so that they advance economically and socially. It creates such an environment, which is favorable for the development of women entrepreneurs. WCCI is equipping women entrepreneurs with the skills required for establishing and running their businesses successfully by organizing and conducting seminars, conferences and workshops that build up their capacity and creates awareness among them. WCCI is holding exhibitions and establishing display centers where women entrepreneurs can establish their products. It is also working hard for creating network linkages nationally and internationally for women entrepreneurs. Hence WCCI believes in the potential of female entrepreneurs of Pakistan and is exclusively dedicated to promote the cause of women in local business.

⁵⁷International Labor Organisation ILO, 2003.

⁵⁸Anna Nadgrodkiewicz, "Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: The Impact of the 2006 Trade Organizations Ordinance in Pakistan," *Economic Reform Feature Service Article*, Centre for International Private Enterprise CIPE (2011).

3.3. Women Business Development Centre (WBDC)

WBDC is another initiative by the Government of Pakistan established in June 2010, which is doing valuable work for fostering women entrepreneurs. It is a project of SMEDA (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority). It supports and provides business related services to women entrepreneurs. This project mainly focuses on motivating new ventures and provides support to the existing enterprises supervised by the business management professionals for women more specifically during start-up period that is the initial 5 years since the businesses are most vulnerable during this time. It also arranges workshops, seminars, trainings and conferences as a part of its obligatory activities so as to professionally groom women entrepreneurs. Its mission is to speed up the rate of growth of women's business and micro enterprise ownership.

3.4. SMEDA (Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority)

SMEDA was established in October 1998 for developing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Pakistan under Ministry of Industries. It focuses on providing business development services to SMEs to encourage their growth in the country. It facilitates SMEs in secure financing and strengthens them by conducting workshops, training programs and seminars. SMEDA facilitates the development of representative association and bodies of SME. It also sets up and manages a database of a service that includes suppliers and machinery for SMEs. It is working on different projects like PM Youth Business Loan, Cluster Development, Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and Development Partner Initiatives.

4. Research Methodology

This study makes use of both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis for determining the characteristics of women entrepreneurs operating their businesses in Pakistan; their perceptions about the prevailing environment related to women entrepreneurship in Pakistan (mean, standard deviation) and the relationship between independent and dependent variable has been determined through the use of multiple regression analysis.

The women entrepreneurs who fall in the definition by Rashid and Anwar (2016) have been selected for the research study i.e. both registered and non-registered members are selected who have been managing their ventures for more than a year. The researcher collected data from two groups to analyze the impact of formal networks on women entrepreneurial performance i.e., Registered Women Entrepreneurs and non-registered Women Entrepreneurs of Pakistan. The population of this study consists of "the total number of women entrepreneurs registered with different women chambers of commerce and industry in all the provinces of Pakistan that are actually active as well as those women who were running their businesses on a very small level and intended to become women entrepreneurs but didn't become (non-registered) so equal number of these women is also included as a research population.

4.1. Sample Size Determination

The population according to the above-mentioned criterion for registered group touches the figure of 693 after consulting all the Women Chambers of Commerce and Industries of Pakistan. Hence the final sample of the number of active women entrepreneurs of Pakistan registered with different women chambers of commerce and industry in all the provinces for this research is 253 (using the help of formula of Yamane (1967) for finite population keeping e = chances of error to 5 %).

Table 3: Sample Size Determination

Active Women Entrepreneurs		
Population	Formula	Sample
$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * (e)^2}$		
693	$\frac{693}{1 + 693 * (.05)^2}$	253

The same number (i.e., 253) of non-registered women entrepreneurs was also targeted so the total number of women entrepreneurs for this research is 506 i.e. 253 registered and 253 non-registered members.

4.2. Data Collection

A self-administered questionnaire was developed for collecting data from the respondents (registered and non-registered women entrepreneurs of Pakistan). The five point Likert scale (from strongly disagree 1 to strongly agree 5) were used to evaluate the responses to every item.

The researcher approached the active registered members by using the list provided by TDAP (Trade Development Authority of Pakistan). The respondents were selected from the list through random sampling method. As for the non-registered members, the questionnaire was posted on different groups on facebook i.e., “Shebizz,” “Ladies buy and sell,” “wOmania,” “Sheops,” and “Peshawar buy and sell.” The respondents filled the online questionnaire (google docs) and the researcher kept on accepting the responses till the desired figure was reached i.e., 253 for non-registered members.

5. Analysis

In the present study, descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was used for analyzing the data. Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS), Version 20 was used in this regard. The reliability was established to find how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. The reliability in the present study was over .70, which indicates that reliability of all the constructs is well above the recommended value. Hence, good reliability was attained. The reliability for both registered and non-registered groups is given below:

Table 4: Reliability of Research Instrument

S. No	Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	
			Registered	Non-Registered
01	Formal Networks	5	.977	.973
02	Entrepreneurial Performance	5	.832	.826

AVE (Average Variance Extracted) was calculated for each factor for both groups. The results revealed that convergent validity for all constructs was established and had AVE over the required value of .50. It is given in the following table.

Table 5: Convergent Validity

Construct	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	
	Registered	Non-Registered
Formal Networks	.90	.90
Entrepreneurial Performance	.60	.59

5.1. Descriptive Statistics for Social Factors in the Study

Data on Formal Networks was collected from both Registered and Non-Registered Entrepreneurs. The Formal Networks construct evaluates the perception of the entrepreneurs pertinent to their formal working networks. The construct was measured using five different statements. The results are given below.

a. For Registered Members

For Registered members the results indicate that the respondents are in agreement that they have very limited access to formal networks.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Formal Networks–Registered Members (N=253)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
I have better contacts (networks) with other business/es or employers	1.00	5.00	2.5375	1.55443
Formal relationships with different stake holders help me to generate new ideas	1.00	5.00	2.6166	1.56577
I use formal contacts to get the things done	1.00	5.00	2.5336	1.47056
I am interested to establish formal networks to scan business opportunities	1.00	5.00	2.5178	1.52124
My formal networks help me in giving moral support, financial aid, material aid and service, advice and other help	1.00	5.00	2.5138	1.48431

b. For Non- Registered Members

For non-registered members the results also indicate that the respondents are in agreement that they have very limited access to formal networks.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Formal Factors Non-Registered Members (N=253)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
I have better contacts (networks) with other business/es or employers	1.00	5.00	2.6601	1.28293
Formal relationships with different stake holders help me to generate new ideas	1.00	5.00	2.6759	1.27463
I use formal contacts to get the things done	1.00	5.00	2.6126	1.25363
I am interested to establish formal networks to scan business opportunities	1.00	5.00	2.7115	1.34214
My formal networks help me in giving moral support, financial aid, material aid and service, advice and other help	1.00	5.00	2.5573	1.20912

5.2. Hypotheses Testing

a. For Registered Members

The results demonstrate the effect of Formal Networks on Entrepreneurial Performance on non-registered members. The results show that Formal Networks has significant effect on Entrepreneurial Performance, as the t value (3.950) is significant at 5% probability level which document that Formal Networks has significant on Entrepreneurial Performance. The R Square; 0.59 suggests that 59% changes are caused by Formal Networks in Entrepreneurial Performance. The F value; 15.604 suggests that the overall model is significant. The results further demonstrate that there is a significant positive relationship between Entrepreneurial Performance and Formal networks.

Table 8: Coefficients of Formal Networks of Registered Members

Variables	Beta	Std. Error	t	P.V
Formal Networks	0.080	0.20	3.950	0.000

R Square= 0.59, F-value= 15.60

Table 9: Correlations

	EP	FN
Pearson Correlation	1	.242**
EP		
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	253	253
Pearson Correlation	.242**	1
FN		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	253	253

b. For Non-Registered Members

The results demonstrate the effect of Formal Networks on Entrepreneurial Performance on non-registered members. The results show that Formal Networks has significant effect on Entrepreneurial Performance, as the t value (2.599) is significant at 5% probability level which document that Formal Networks has significant on Entrepreneurial Performance. The R Square; 0.26 suggests that 26% changes are caused by Formal Networks in Entrepreneurial Performance. The F value; 6.75 suggests that the overall model is significant. The results further demonstrate that there is a significant positive relationship between Entrepreneurial Performance and Formal networks.

Table 10: Coefficients of Formal Networks of Non-Registered Members

Variables	Beta	Std. Error	t	P.V
Formal Networks	0.070	0.27	2.599	0.10

R Square= 0.26, F-value= 6.75

Table 11. Correlations

		EP	FN
EP	Pearson Correlation	1	.162**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	253	253
FN	Pearson Correlation	.162**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	253	253

6. Findings

The findings of the present study are as follows:

1. There are no religious barriers in Islam, which restrict women not to choose entrepreneurship. A Muslim woman is permitted to do the business within the framework of Islamic principles and *Shari'ah*.
2. The respondents (both registered and non-registered entrepreneurs) are in agreement that they have very limited access to formal networks.
3. The results show that Formal Networks has significant affect on Entrepreneurial Performance of both registered and non-registered members.

7. Discussion

The present study measures the impact Formal Networks on Women Entrepreneurial Performance of Pakistan. Two hypotheses guided the collected process of data. The findings of the research indicate the following:

The descriptive analysis of the study found that the women entrepreneurs (both registered and non-registered members) are in agreement that they have very limited access to formal networks. They have limited networks to other businesses or employers

due to which women are unable to generate new ideas or getting things done easily. Due to lack of formal networks, they are not getting financial, material or moral support. A woman who is not registered to any institute and running her business from home needs formal networks to promote her products. As far as the registered entrepreneurs are concerned, they are a growing segment of the entrepreneur population but when it comes to performing well, the trend seems to fall down because of lack of access to capital and business opportunities and insufficient business networks.

Having limited access to formal networks by the women entrepreneurs indicates that most of the women entrepreneurs of Pakistan are unaware of the services provided by known institutes like Women Business Development Centre (WBDC), Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), NGOs and Chambers of Commerce and Industries of Pakistan. In an era when such institutes are working in Pakistan, the limited access to formal networks to women entrepreneurs is a serious concern. SMEDA is promoting the concept of cluster development by creation of the networks among the entrepreneurs that helps them to come on a single platform for creating new business opportunities. These networks help to promote the culture of Enterprise development in Pakistan.

As for the impact of formal networks on women entrepreneurial performance in Pakistan is concerned, the results of the study reveal that formal networks have a significant impact on women entrepreneurial performance. The impact was significant on both groups i.e. registered and non-registered members. The results are consistent with the works of prior scholars who emphasized on the role of formal networks in getting success and emphasized on the importance of having networks.⁵⁹

⁵⁹Miri Lerner, Candida Brush, and Robert Hisrich, "Israeli Women Entrepreneurs: An Examination of Factors Affecting Performance," *Journal of Business Venturing* 12, no. 4 (1997): 315-339; Hatun Ufuk, and Özlen Özgen, "The Profile of Women Entrepreneurs: A Sample from Turkey," *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 25, no. 4 (2001): 299-308; Per Davidsson, and Benson Honig, "The Role of Social and Human Capital among Nascent Entrepreneurs," *Journal of Business Venturing* 18, no. 3 (2003): 301-331; Isidore Ekpe, Norsiah Mat, and Margaret Isidore Ekpe, "Social Networks and Women Micro-Enterprise Performance: a Conceptual Framework," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 4 (2015): 360; Alain Fayolle, Sarah L. Jack, Wadid Lamine, and Didier Chabaud, eds., *Entrepreneurial Process and Social Networks: a Dynamic Perspective* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016); Wadid Lamine, Alain Fayolle, Sarah Jack, and Janice Byrne, "The Role of Materially Heterogeneous Entities in the Entrepreneurial Network," *Industrial Marketing Management* (2017); Ehsan Fansuree Surin, Oswald Timothy Edward, H. F. Hussin, and Ismail Ab Wahab, "Recognising the Importance of Strategic Business Network on Business Performance of SME Manufacturing Firm in Malaysia: Analysing The Moderating Influence of Human Capital and Business Environment," *International Journal of Arts and Sciences* (2017): 31-44.

8. Conclusion

Networking is regarded as a valuable tool in developing and promoting entrepreneurial culture in society but unfortunately in Pakistan, no such efforts have been observed from the policy makers to facilitate the women entrepreneurs in making strong networks. It is highly suggested that a platform where women entrepreneurs can network should be established, so that information on government assistance availability can be filtered down. Formal networks are of utmost importance when it comes to helping women entrepreneurs in giving material, moral and financial support but unfortunately in Pakistan, women entrepreneurs don't have access to such networks. As a result, they are finding difficulty in boosting up their business performance. They can't seek or look up to any one for business advice. Most of the respondents are unaware of the services rendered by WBDC, SMEDA, NGOs and Chambers of Commerce and Industries of Pakistan. Therefore, due to lack of this networking, there is a gap of formal relations with other members of society (banks associations, chambers). If women entrepreneurs are to be supported to grow, the government of Pakistan must focus its scarce resources on building trust within these formal business networks, where women build the trust that is required for sharing information likely to lead to good business opportunities. That trust can be build up by organizing several workshops regularly which focus on the role played by the leading networking institutions like SMEDA and several Chambers running in the country. It will create awareness among the women owners regarding how to do networking and get benefits from it for improving their businesses' performance. Although SMEDA is putting in efforts in organizing such training programs but still there is a dire need to arrange such training programs at grass root level where even an uneducated woman entrepreneur learns how to make best use of networking.

9. Recommendations

The Pakistani women entrepreneurs need to have an acute understanding of the entrepreneurial culture and how to make an overall plan for the business in order to succeed.

Chambers and different associations can play their role more promptly in this regard. Different social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are helping out home-based women entrepreneurs to sell out their products easily on different groups (Sheops, WomenX, Ladies buy and sell) but there is still a dire need of networking for women entrepreneurs to reach more customers. While the government has carried out various efforts in promoting and facilitating women entrepreneurship in Pakistan by establishing Women Chambers of Commerce and Industry, SMEDA, First Women Bank Ltd, yet there is more to be accomplished. The policy makers should continue their efforts to nurture more women entrepreneurs and also to facilitate their success. The government agencies, media, educational policy makers should make collaborative efforts for providing women with improved access to business development services and helping out regional, local and national networks.

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